

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 123402
ORIGIN NEA-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /005 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARP:JRCOUNTRYMAN
APPROVED BY NEA/ARP:JWTTWINAM
-----281810Z 111139 /42
R 272015Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANAMA

S E C R E T STATE 123402

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, BA

SUBJECT: WEAPONS FOR BAHRAIN

FOLLOWING IS A REPEAT
QUOTE
R 060307Z FEB 77
FROM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

SECRET STATE 026815
E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, BA

SUBJECT: WEAPONS FOR BAHRAIN

REFERENCES: (A) JIDDA 587, (B) MANAMA 1772, (C) STATE
283435, (D) MANAMA 1941, (E) STATE 274226

1. FYI: AS EMBASSY AWARE FROM REFTELS B TO E, WE HAVE BEEN
ENGAGED FOR SOME TIME IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOB ON
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RETENTION OF MIDEASTFOR BEYOND THE GOB'S STANDING JUNE 1977
WITHDRAWAL DATE. THIS POSSIBILITY WAS FIRST RAISED LAST
SUMMER BY BAHRAINI PRIME MINISTER, IN CONTEXT HIS DESIRE FOR

SOME FORM OF "CONCESSIONAL" MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM THE
U.S. IT LATER BECAME REASONABLY CLEAR THAT GOB WAS
DETERMINED TO SEEK SIGNIFICANT U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT

BEYOND THE HELICOPTERS WE WERE PREPARED TO RECOMMEND ON BASIS AUGUST 1976 SURVEY.

2. AFTER INTENSIVE USG REVIEW WE DECIDED TO PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF BAHRAINI DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS TO ESTABLISH A PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERATION OF ANY POSSIBLE BAHRAINI ARMS REQUESTS. THE SURVEY TEAM VISITED BAHRAIN LAST DECEMBER AND HAS NOW DRAFTED ITS REPORT WHICH IS PRESENTLY BEING REVIEWED IN DOD PRIOR TO DEPARTMENT REVIEW.

3. WE UNDERSTAND SAG AND GOB (OR AT LEAST RESPECTIVE DEFENSE MINISTERS) HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT OVER LAST SEVERAL YEARS ABOUT BAHRAIN'S DEFENSE MODERNIZATION PLANS AND EXTENT TO WHICH SAG MIGHT FINANCE THEM. AT VARIOUS TIMES BAHRAINI PRIME MINISTER OR DEFENSE MINISTER HAS INFORMALLY APPROACHED U.S. OFFICIALS ABOUT POSSIBILITY SELLING SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SUCH AS F-5E'S, TOW, REDEYE, HAWK, AND PATROL BOATS SIMILAR TO SAUDI BOATS EQUIPPED WITH HARPOON. WE HAVE MADE NO COMMITMENT OF ANY KIND TO SELL SUCH WEAPONS. END FYI.

4. IN RESPONSE TO SULTAN'S INQUIRY, YOU MAY WISH TO INFORM HIM THAT USG HAS GIVEN GOB AUGUST 1976 SURVEY REPORT CONTAINING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HELICOPTER-EQUIPPED MILITARY UNIT APPROPRIATE FOR BAHRAIN'S COASTAL DEFENSE. YOU MAY ALSO TELL SULTAN THAT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WE WILL BE PRESENTING THE GOB WITH THE RESULTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF BAHRAINI DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS. IN
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MAKING YOUR PRESENTATION, YOU SHOULD ASSURE SULTAN THAT THE USG HAS MADE NO COMMITMENT TO SELL BAHRAIN ANY MAJOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT. YOU MAY SAY AS WELL THAT WE APPRECIATE RECEIVING SULTAN'S VIEWS ON BAHRAINI DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURE HIM THAT ANY FUTURE GOB REQUEST FOR WEAPONS WILL BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY IN LIGHT OF BAHRAINI SECURITY NEEDS, THE SITUATION IN THE REGION, THE INTERESTS OF THE U.S. AND OF OUR FRIENDS IN THE AREA (ON WHICH SAUDI VIEWS WOULD OF COURSE FIGURE PROMINENTLY), AND OF THE GENERAL CONCERN IN U.S. ABOUT THE VOLUME OF U.S. MILITARY SALES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. VANCE UNQUOTE
VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY EQUIPMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE123402
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JRCOUNTRYMAN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770191-1300
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977058/aaaaaglz.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1f824698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 JIDDA 587, 77 MANAMA 1772, 77 STATE 7
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2599783
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WEAPONS FOR BAHRAIN FOLLOWING IS A REPEAT QUOTE
TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, BA
To: MANAMA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1f824698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009